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SUBJECT: Maoist Leader Calls For Talks; King Calls in
Parliament to Extend Emergency

REFERENCE: Kathmandu 695

1. (SBU) Summary. A Maoist leader sent a letter to Nepal's main political parties May 14 calling for talks with the government. The Prime Minister's political advisor called the offer a ploy to allow the insurgents to regroup. The opposition echoed the same sentiment, adding that the Maoists were feeling the effects of international pressure. The King has called in Parliament May 23 to consider extending the state of emergency. A May 17 all-party meeting to discuss an extension was inconclusive, but reportedly security forces pushed hard to a continuation and the PM is willing to go along. Maoists used the occasion of three rounds of talks in late 2001 to regroup and plan attacks against army installations. End Summary.

Maoists Ask for Talks

2. (U) Maoist leader Prachanda sent a letter to Nepal's main political parties May 14 calling for talks to resolve the ongoing conflict in Nepal. [Post's translation of the Nepali-language text follows paragraph 7.] Prachanda's message came in response to recent statements by leaders of Nepal's major political parties appealing for peace talks. His statement emphasizes the need to take control of Nepal's army away from the Royal Palace and give it to "the people," and berates "feudal reactionary elements" for plotting to hand the country over to a foreign power and for requesting foreign military intervention.

A Ploy, PM's Advisor Says

3. (SBU) Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's political advisor, in meeting with Poloff, characterized the overture as a "ploy" and said the Maoists were not sincere. They would only use peace talks as an opportunity to regroup, consolidate and plan further attacks.

Opposition Party Also Skeptical

4. (SBU) Nepal's main opposition party, CPN-UML, was studying the statement and had not yet decided on its response, the UML spokesperson told us. [Note: The UML felt confident of the letter's authenticity.] Previous Maoist statements were not sincere, he said, and this might be another "ill-intentioned tactic." Prachanda's latest letter might be intended to dissuade the U.S., U.K. and India from providing military assistance, he added. The UML judged that the Maoists were on the defensive - although their core force was not destroyed, they were confined to remote areas - and now was the time to build up Nepal's security forces, not to go in for talks.

PM to Seek Extension of Emergency

5. (SBU) The King has called a special session of Parliament for May 23 to consider extending the state of emergency in effect since November 26, 2001. The Prime Minister called an all-party meeting at his office May 17 to discuss the matter. A reporter from Nepal's official news agency told us that the heads of the army and police had requested an extension, while the political parties had argued against it. In reply, PM Deuba reportedly said that while personally he did not support a continued emergency, the government should heed the security forces' request. The reporter concluded that the result of the meeting was unclear, but speculated that the government would seek an extension.

6. (SBU) After the meeting, the PM's political advisor told us that the government would recommend an extension. He added that even though opposition parties might speak out against the emergency, they would do so to cater to their own constituencies and in fact supported an

extension. [Note: Reportedly the heads of the Nepali Congress Party, UML and Rastriya Prajatantra Pakshye (RPP) - the three largest parties - all missed the meeting due either to prior commitments or illness. End Note.]

Comment

17. (SBU) The Maoists used last year's negotiations as an opportunity to regroup and to plan the devastating attacks against army installations in November. Many believe - including those in the GON - that they would likely behave similarly should the government agree to hold talks with them now. Security forces apparently continue to push for an extension of the emergency even after Parliament enacted a new law giving them expanded powers even when an emergency is not in effect (Reftel). That the leaders of the three largest political parties stayed away from the meeting gives them some deniability and cover in the all-too-likely event they may use the request for extension as an opportunity for political posturing. Ultimately, however, Parliament looks likely to go along when they meet late next week.

Text of Prachanda's May 14 Statement

(U) Begin Text:

Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
Central Committee

Dear Mr. Chairman/President/General Secretary,

Today the country is in a most serious economic, political and cultural crisis. On the basis of social scientific norms and historical experience, it can undoubtedly be said that the insufficiency of the capitalist democratic revolution has been the main cause behind the pain and trouble faced by Nepali society. As long as the military power, which is a major wing of any government, is not placed under the control of the representatives of the people, any democracy in any form or under any name cannot be a long-lasting or real democracy. Although this scientific reality has been proven in several instances, the tradition of negligence and [false] compromises in Nepalese politics has been a major and serious flaw in bringing the control of the military force from the feudal palace to the people. Despite many limitations, problems and weaknesses, the armed movement of our party is an expression of the historic need to bring the military force ultimately under the control of the people in order to provide self-sufficiency to the capitalist republican revolution.

Today the feudal elements with their traditional military force are again trying to impose tyranny on the people by attacking the main spirit of the achievements made through the historic People's Movement of 1990. In our analysis, the dreadful attacks on the 1990 achievements began on the day of the Narayanhity Palace massacre [June 1, 2001]. All the ups and downs since then are the essential results of that. Looking at the drama of [last year's] negotiations - which had no political alternative and no settlement - and the mobilization of the Royal Nepal Army against the people, we were compelled to continue the armed struggle. Today the feudal army is encountering heavy losses in the battles at the real fronts due to the dedication, bravery and sacrifice exhibited by the people in protest of the so-called emergency and the Royal Nepal Army. Putting price tags on the heads of Maoist leaders and demanding foreign military interference, the feudal regressive elements are now busy endeavoring to give away the country to foreign powers. This is a dreadful attack on the freedom and sovereignty of Nepal and the Nepalese people. This exercise has intensified the existing crisis of the country to a very great extent.

To free the country from this national crisis, the need of a united initiative from the partner political powers of the historic 1990 people's movement, now both in parliament and outside of parliament, has increased many times over. Our party has been pointing seriously to this need since the palace murder scandal. That we have never closed the door to talks leading to a positive political way out is a fact not hidden to anyone. Our party has, in a very positive sense, welcomed the appeal by seven political parties, including your party in the parliament, for the resolution of the existing crisis through talks and dialogue in a political manner. The wish of almost all political parties, social organizations, human rights groups, intellectuals and the public for a peaceful political exit has been publicized. It is a matter of pleasure and pride for all of us that the whole nation has been on the side of talks and a political settlement. It is time now that a solid step is taken on the basis of the

people's current opinion. Therefore, we are writing this letter with the objective of maintaining uniformity in the process of moving the country in the right direction by freeing the country from the existing crisis through formal and informal discussions on bilateral and multilateral bases.

Prachanda
President, Central Committee
Nepal Communist Part (Maoist)
May 14, 2002

End Text.

MALINOWSKI